



Mr. Helms

The CIA Director commended an editorial labeled "Brickbats for Fulbright"



Senator Fulbright

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CIA CHIEF VS. FULBRIGHT

Helms's Letter Irks Senate

President Johnson has let it be known at times that he doesn't look with favor on the critical remarks made about his foreign policies by Senator J. W. Fulbright (Dem.), of Arkansas.

Now one of Mr. Johnson's recent appointees to high federal office has gone him one better. Richard Helms, named Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in June, conveyed his thoughts in a letter to the editor of "The St. Louis Globe-Democrat."

"I want to let you know of my pleasure in reading the editorial 'Brickbats for Fulbright' in 'The Globe-Democrat' of July 18," wrote Mr. Helms. "It reflects so well your paper's policy of printing the news impartially, supporting what it believes to be right and opposing what it believes to be wrong without regard to party politics."

The letter appeared in "The Globe-Democrat" of July 27.

The editorial in question exulted in what it called the "comeuppance" given Mr. Fulbright when the Senate, on July 14, rejected efforts to expand Senate surveillance of the CIA. The measure would have added members of Mr. Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee to the Senate's CIA-watchers.

The editorial, which referred to Mr. Fulbright as the "crafty Arkansan," said this about the measure: "It could mean the end of the CIA if the Agency were subjected to claws of the militant doves on Fulbright's Committee."

As might have been expected, the letter drew Senate fire. Senator Eugene McCarthy (Dem.), of Minnesota, called it

"entirely out of place," added that Mr. Helms "owes an apology to every member of the Senate."

Senator Mike Mansfield (Dem.), of Montana, the Majority Leader, also was critical. He said he found it surprising that the chief of the "silent service" had suddenly become a controversial figure.

After Senators from both parties joined in criticizing Mr. Helms, he telephoned Senator Fulbright to convey his apology. "I made a mistake," Mr. Helms was quoted as saying, "and I sincerely regret it."

On July 29, Mr. Helms appeared before a closed session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. After the two-hour meeting, Senator Fulbright told newsmen that the letter, prepared by a subordinate, had been among other letters placed before Mr. Helms for signature.

Mr. Helms was reported to have explained to the Committee that his attention did not focus as thoroughly on the letter as it might have.

Said Senator Fulbright: "I think his statement was a very forthright, honest statement. He made a mistake. On the whole, I think he did an excellent job of explaining his mistake."

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